



T H E S I S

THE NEED OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING

by

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upon graduation from the

K A N S A S S T A T E A G R I C U L T U R A L C O L L E G E

1907.

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SOME ASPECTS OF LANDSCAPE GARDENING.
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Since the advent of cheap and rapid transportation and verbal communication, the tendency is for the population to spread itself over more territory. Not the least of the factors in causing the popularity of suburban residence is the opportunity thus afforded of surrounding one's home with out-door beauty. We are just beginning to realize what real country life means. A home should include the beautiful as well as the useful. However, this does not necessarily imply, as many people think, the accumulation of useless articles of so called ornamental value. Landscape gardening is the one art in which we possess and use the living things themselves and not mere representations of them. The ^{title} ~~little~~, landscape gardener arose more than a century ago to designate the new art which aimed to give landscape like effects to gardens. It signifies the enlargement of mere gardening into complete harmony with nature. Before the advent of this new art, gardens were formal in their dominant features. Their chief value was to augment the architectural features in the scenes of which they became a part.

One reason why the art of landscape gardening was not earlier recognized and developed is because nature is the superior artist. She accomplishes in the whole what man can picture but in part. When she wishes to be beautiful, to delight the eye, etc., she does almost what we should do

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if we had her treasures at our command. She is the artist's master. From her he gets hints and suggestions which his own imagination transposes into a picture.

However, no garden can be absolutely natural, as the use to which it is put is of necessity in evidence through walks, drives, bridges, etc. The frankness and simplicity with which all artificial features are introduced adds rather than detracts from the general effect. While straight lines are to be avoided, curves must have a sufficient reason for their existence. The plantings should be disposed in such a way as to conceal the destination at some points, while opening up the best view at others.

Since our first impressions are strongest, it is well in planning the approach to a building to have the first view an advantageous one. If a series of curves are necessary it is a good plan to make one more prominent than another. The laying out of grounds by mere maps or plans without any study of the lands themselves, is seldom other than artificial, and it is in adapting a plan to the particular ground in question that requires ^{the} skill and taste of the trained landscape gardener.

There are so many things to be considered that a personal visit to the ground is usually a necessity. The character and fitness of the grade, expanse, and detail of the shrubbery, the directness and beauty of all walks and drives, the character of plantings already on the ground, and the amount of use the grounds will receive. All these require a treatment suggested by the locality to be beautified.

Beauty of all living things depends on their health and adaption to surroundings. This is as true of plants as of animals. Therefore, in transplanting a landscape, the climate and soil conditions are of the first consideration. And yet there is no excuse for neglecting to beautify where these are adverse to the majority of ornamental plants.

There are always to be found native plants whose beauty is adapted to their habitat. These may be enriched by exotic species from countries having similar conditions. Perhaps this is the best excuse for introducing foreign plants into a scene, as too great a variety of species is dangerous to the unity and simplicity of effect. In our climate it is seldom necessary to call upon other countries for our materials.

"That is best which lieth nearest;

Shape from that thy work of art."

There is beauty in everything if we can but see it. Even the despised cottonwood tree has its points of value. It is the fastest growing tree for the climate, it is used to give dignity to masses to be viewed at a distance, its large size adapts it to use as a back-ground and also a wind-break to inner plantings, and above all, it will grow where trees are rare, without coddling, and this is no small item where a tree is a tree.

Plantings are useful not alone as used in naturalistic gardens and parks but their most universal value is ^{as} an aid in architectural adornment. They are needed to give a sett-

ing to buildings. The plantings should be so planned as to augment the natural characteristics of the building site and give stability of appearance to the building. In uniting a house to grounds, shrubbery and vines are the best materials. These should not be massed in such profusion as to hide the foundation but shrubs may be planted in groups at angles in building and paths. A few^w, hardy perennial climbers are indispensable to the home-like appearance of porch and wall. Where room is limited they are especially valuable. Honey-suckle is well adapted to connecting house to grounds where it can be allowed to trail both upon the house and down upon the ground.

Care must be exercised to harmonize the color of the house and its immediate surroundings. Paint is useful, not only for the preservation of frame buildings but to blend the house and its adjacent vegetation in harmonious unity. Many of the neutral shades of the gray's and drab's are preferable to white.

Hedges are seldom used on city lots, but if preferred for dividing a planting into several scenes or pictures, their beauty depends upon their finish and grace of outline. Too often they are allowed to barricade a view and thus give an air of exclusiveness, not in keeping with true American hospitality.

The great value of our rich variety of evergreens is best appreciated when most deciduous trees and shrubs are useless. While a rich and harmonious variety of scenes in

color delight the eye in spring, summer and autumn, there is nothing to compare with the pure, silent beauties of a winter's morning among the evergreens. Each species has its own beauties when decked with snow. For individual beauty the year round, perhaps the Colorado Blue Spruce is the handsomest. The Norway and Douglass Spruce are more open but still graceful in form and are invaluable for backgrounds. The ^White Pine is a good tree both as a specimen tree and in groups, its beautiful soft foliage working in well with many other trees.

While color in winter is rare in nature, it can be introduced with taste into scenes by means of shrubs. Among the most common hardy ^{shrubs} of value for color are the burning, or fire bush, the fruit vesicles of which open late in October. When the rough pods open the seeds blaze forth from within like a lighted candle. The bush is a brilliant scarlet after the leaves fall. The cork-barked variety is dwarf and is good for use in bordering groups of evergreens. The Barberry is bright with fruit until April. The red-barked dog-wood is prominent as soon as the leaves fall. The high bush Cranberry is brilliant with fruit as early as August. For early spring, the Japanese Quince, having bright red blossoms and the Golden Bell bearing festoons of yellow, are perhaps the best known.

The sweet scented honeysuckle carries its leaves nearly all winter while the Pin Oak is prominent for the same reason, giving a pleasing, though somewhat sombre touch of va-

riety to the winter scene.

The value of landscape art to the public is best seen in our parks and cemeteries. The value of such magnificent artificial public pleasure grounds as San Francisco's Golden Gate Park, and New York's Central Park, may be self evident to all, but the time is coming when such spots will be more valuable than we ever dreamed of.

Our National parks are few and far between but we have the means for preserving them and are slowly, but surely learning their worth. While man boasts of his triumph over nature, a rapidly increasing few, such as Downing, Vanx, and Olmsted, are demonstrating their ability to overcome great obstacles with her assistance. Since John Muir's statement that present conditions are favorable instead of otherwise for the preservation of the Giant Redwood and the increase of the same, we may get a glimpse in imagination of this wonderful tree dotting our great country thousands of years hence.

It is to be hoped that our ability to assist and manipulate, nature will grow apace with our love and appreciation for her. Our landscape gardeners might well follow the example of the Japanese in calling to their assistance in dealing with large problems, parks etc., the assistance of landscape painters. Indeed their problems exceed in difficulty those of the painter.

Color in landscape art is of such importance that it is difficult to treat it in brief. "When the landscape painter

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wants harmony he need plan for only one set of color, but the gardener must remember that his colors will alter week by week and must plan so that the scene which is beautiful in flowery May will be beautiful in green July and not discordant in harlequin October. If we analyze the masterpiece of coloring we shall find that what we at first supposed to be wonderful single effects of color is really the result of juxtaposition which bring out each color to its highest power." "The most effective combinations of colors, when they are rightly made, are those which mean contrast rather than simple concord. But it is usually better and always safer to place two tones of the same tint together as a dark and a lighter bluish-green, rather than to associate two alien tints, as a blush with a yellowish green. Grayish greens are best when something is needed to harmonize other strongly contrasting tints."

In arranging pictures with nature's forms and colors, it is absolutely necessary that the artist should carry in his mind's eye an accurate and detailed conception of the values of each plant. He may know what tint and shape he wants but if he does not know what plants will give it, he is at a hopeless disadvantage. There are numberless rules for the combinations of colors but each new problem needs individual taste; the cultivation of our own perceptive powers; the touch of the artist who should be guided by art.

After all it is the application of general principles, rather than rules by one who knows something of both archi-

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itecture and gardening that will solve the many complex problems of appropriateness, simplicity, harmony, variety in unity, and a clear expression of clearly conceived ideals.

The time must come when every portion of land not actually in use for other purposes shall be artistically used.

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